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For the past twenty years, I have worked as an advisor with preschool, elementary, and junior high teachers in a variety of school situations.

I learned about advising at the Mountain View Center in Boulder, Colorado. The Center was directed by David and Frances Hawkins and was modeled after an advisory center in Leicestershire County, England. Workshops and courses in all areas of curriculum, as well as classroom advisory work, were offered to local preschool and elementary school teachers. There were generalist advisors who had considerable classroom experience, as well as advisors whose primary expertise was their specialty—science, mathematics, reading, art, and so on. I was a generalist advisor from 1971 to 1982. More recently, I have worked with seventh and eighth grade teachers at Central Park East Secondary School in New York City.

Advisory Work with Classroom Teachers

There are probably as many different advisory styles as there are people doing this work. Advisors draw on their training, experience, and theoretical beliefs as they develop a personal way of working with teachers. Most advisors however, whose work is based on or influenced by the advisory practice in England in the 1960s and 1970s, try to work only with teachers who have asked for assistance.

Stuart Mason, Leicestershire's Chief Education Officer from 1947 to 1971, emphasized this point:

> It is essential that an advisor only goes where he is welcome, that if the head of a school, head of a department or class teacher does not

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After graduating from Bank Street College in 1957, Maja Apelman taught preschool and kindergarten for ten years in New York City schools, including four years at Bank Street's School for Children. From 1967 to 1971, she was an instructor in early childhood education at New York University, teaching in a residential program for Head Start paraprofessionals. In the fall of 1971, Dr. Apelman moved to Boulder, Colorado to join the staff of the Mountain View Center at the University of Colorado, where she worked as an advisor to preschool and elementary school teachers and later participated in a science research project directed by David Hawkins. Since 1963, she has been active as a freelance educator—teaching, writing, and consulting in Colorado and the Southwest as well as on the East and West coasts.

> want him, whether the reason is a good one or as trivial as that he does not like the cut of his waistcoat, that is the end of it.
>
> The next most important point is that the advisor should, as far as possible, be removed from any sources of power. He must rely on his own intrinsic capability of exercising influence in the particular or broad area in which he has been appointed to advise. . . . An advisor, for example, should have no direct connection with transfers or promotions of teachers. . . . [Thirdly] an advisor should never be put in the position of assessing for his employer, or any other agency, the merits of one school or one teacher against another.
>
> Lastly, advisors should be continuously discouraged from becoming administrators. They should be given enough administrative support to justify the expectation that they spend most of their time in the field. (Brearley et al., 1972)

Voluntarism, confidentiality, and freedom from administrative pressures are important in advisory work.

Advisors can begin working with teachers almost anywhere. Teachers may request help in a particular subject area, around problems with a particular child or group of children, around matters of organization and scheduling, or to implement new curriculum ideas. Some teachers feel more comfortable if they start with a conference; others may ask for a general classroom observation with subsequent feedback. Even if teachers do not have a specific request, they usually have a general idea of the direction in which they want to move and they know that some change will take place as a result of working with an advisor. The success of advisory work depends on a relationship of mutual trust and respect that develops gradually as teachers and advisors work and learn together through their attempts to solve the problems of daily teaching.

In my advisory work, I spent a great deal of time in classrooms—observing, assisting, and interacting with children. In general, my work developed from teachers' stated needs and included: helping with management problems; observing individual children; leading discussions so teachers could see the involvement of children if they were interested in a subject; changing room arrangements to create better learning environments; introducing new materials and activities; assisting with trip planning and curriculum development; and encouraging greater use of community resources.

My classroom work was appreciated by the teachers, but lunch-time and after-school talks were just as important to them. Giving feedback is an essential ingredient of advisory work. It helps to make connections for teachers and encourages them to become more reflective. After I had worked in Heather's room for several weeks, she told me, "I enjoy getting feedback. You don't often

get it in education. You're alone in your room. When the principal comes in, he isn't looking for the same things we are looking for."

Asked what was most helpful about my work with her,[1] Sharon, a first grade teacher, answered:

> All the challenges she throws out and having her there observing, and just the immediate feedback on that from somebody who is kind of on the same wavelength. . . . After the kids leave, that's almost the most helpful time. We just sit there and talk about it. She'll ask me questions and make comments about different things that happened and talk about different kids, just different problems. I just sit there and write constantly the whole time I'm talking to her . . . probably the biggest help has been just kind of tying all these loose ends that I had together and making sense out of them. I've had reasons why I did everything, but none of them all tied together into a total program.

Later, Sharon was asked to describe if and how her teaching had changed during the semester she worked with me:

> Instead of thinking about teaching something to my class, I spend a lot more time thinking about individual kids. . . . I feel like I've gotten to know each kid much better at this point in the year than I ever have before, and I feel like I'm teaching [the children] to learn things on their own. . . . I feel much more like a teacher.

Sharon was beginning to make connections. She was learning on her own.

Teachers often look at consultants with some degree of suspicion. They don't like outsiders to come in and tell them what to do. I found that my own classroom experience gave me credibility. Though many of the teachers I worked with told me that they were quite nervous before my first visit, they soon relaxed and appreciated having an interested and supportive adult in their room. One teacher told me early in our work, "Never in all the years that I've been teaching has there been anyone in my room who didn't come to criticize. I don't mind you at all in my class; the kids could be all over and I wouldn't mind."

My classroom work, including individual conferences with teachers, accounted for about 50% of my time. Since I worked out of an advisory and teachers' center, I also led discussion groups and taught workshops and seminars. One year, for instance, I worked with five first grade teachers who all needed firmer grounding in child development. I organized biweekly sessions in which we would discuss problems that had come up in the different classrooms. After a few sessions, I realized that these teachers had poor observation skills, so we concentrated on observing children in many different situations to begin to see patterns of behavior and to learn how to diagnose problems.

Another year, I decided to offer a weekly seminar, which I called Discussions about Teaching. This is how the course was described in Mountain View Center's bulletin, which went to all Boulder elementary schools:

> This is a course for teachers who have questions which they wish to discuss with colleagues: questions about their educational philosophy, questions about their curriculum as it relates (or does not relate) to the needs of children, questions about their teaching methods, about testing, and so on. One focus of the course will be on curriculum content: how to choose, develop, and organize appropriate subject matter for children of different ages, and how to extend and evaluate the learning that arises from it.
>
> Since I am particularly interested in the problems faced by teachers who want to put theory into practice, I hope to visit the schools of participating teachers and be available for individual conferences.

In this class I wanted to bring together two facets of my work—teaching courses at the Center, and working with teachers in their classrooms. I thought that my work in schools would be strengthened if teachers could meet regularly with their colleagues to discuss common questions and problems, and that knowing the classrooms and teaching styles of the participants firsthand would help me to plan discussions of interest to all concerned. I also hoped that the teachers in this course would start an informal network so that like-minded individuals in the district could share experiences and get the support they often lacked. Without such contact, teaching can be very lonely.

In her essay *Teacher: Being and Becoming*, Edna Shapiro (this issue, p. 17) states:

> One of the fundamental premises of a program of teacher education must be that it cannot be complete. Students should know that graduation does not confer expertise, that they should expect to fumble and make mistakes, that they will and must keep on learning and trying and reexamining their experiences.

Teachers, in order to remain fresh and committed, must also continue to be learners. Teachers who think that they know all there is to know about children and curriculum, who don't get excited by new insights into learning, by new approaches to subject matter, or by new ways of working with materials will not serve their children well.

Advisors continually challenge their advisees to become more thoughtful and reflective individuals who will remain learners for the rest of their lives. Teachers need to be learners, not only to experience the excitement and the satisfaction of gaining new insights and knowledge, but also because being en-

gaged in their own learning will help them to understand and respect the many varied ways in which children learn—and that is critical for successful teaching.

Developing Curriculum: A Case Study

The following case history describes the way I worked with a competent first-grade teacher who was searching for a social studies curriculum that would be meaningful to all the children in her class.

Celia attended Mountain View Center's summer workshop in July of 1975, when she had just finished her third year of teaching. I had worked at her school with another teacher and knew that Celia had a smoothly running classroom with many activities for children's various interests. She was no longer struggling with organization or discipline and had good relations with children, parents, and administrators. Yet, like other experienced teachers I knew, she talked of a feeling of dissatisfaction, of something that was missing in her teaching. She seemed to be searching for greater depth and more continuity in children's learning.

Celia taught in a school that placed great emphasis on social studies. She told me that she didn't like social studies: "I didn't want to get a textbook and read some little chapter. I wanted to do something that the kids could relate to and that I could relate to, but I didn't know how to do it." Celia was clearly ready for help and, since social studies was one of my favorite subjects, I looked forward to working with her.

Beginnings

During the summer workshop, I led several discussions on social studies, emphasizing the study of family and community for the early grades. Celia attended all the sessions. I had also planned some field trips to familiarize local teachers with community resources. One of these trips was to the Boulder Municipal Building where there were excellent large-scale aerial photographs of the city and county, as well as all kinds of maps and charts prepared by the various city departments.

My trip was planned for a Friday afternoon. It was a hot day and Celia was the only teacher who showed up. She did not appear enthusiastic, but we decided to go anyway. We started with the Engineering Department where the aerial photographs were kept, as well as maps of the water and sewer lines. We never got beyond that office. This is how Celia described the trip in her summer workshop journal:

> The afternoon was a big surprise for me—a trip to the Municipal Building. I was so interested in everything I saw. It was hard to believe. At first I didn't think I was going to be able to focus in on these things,

> but then Maja gave me a focal point—the location of my house. I found my house on the aerial photo, which was very exciting, and from there I found it on the maps of the sewer and water lines. If anyone asked me today if I'd like to go into the sewer, I'd jump at the chance. It's funny how we change when something interests us. This was a great experience for me. I really feel now that I have an idea where to begin in this area with children. Just think of all the possibilities this could lead to. I have an idea how each child would be able to have a stake in a study like this. It's so necessary to make any project relevant. How can each child find meaning in his immediate environment?

The visit to the Municipal Building must have made something Celia had been struggling with suddenly fall into place. For another teacher, this trip might have been just an excursion to find out where to get some maps. For Celia, it was the beginning of a whole new way of teaching.

After the workshop, Celia asked me if I would work with her in the fall. We met in August for a planning session. Celia told me that the previous year, she had taken many walking trips into the community but had felt that these were not sufficiently related to what was happening in the classroom. She'd had discussions with the children on various topics but did not feel that they went well. She and the children had also made charts and graphs about topics such as birthdays, pets, and favorite foods and TV shows, as well as about all kinds of personal measurements, but sometimes she wondered why she was doing "all these little Nuffield[2] charts; they look good on the walls of my room but they aren't used very much after they are put up." She felt there was something lacking in her program.

We talked for a long time, struggling to identify what was missing. We began to see that all the activities she had described were rather isolated: they did not build on each other; there was no continuity for individual children; and there were few activities involving the whole group. Celia saw that whole-group experiences were missing from her curriculum. She wanted a social studies program that would involve all the children and bring them closer together so they would see themselves as members of a group.

Discussions

I suggested that, rather than making charts of children's birthdays, pets, and other subjects relating to their lives, Celia could talk about some of the same things with the children. It would give her a chance to practice leading discussions and it might get the children more involved. Celia agreed to try this approach even though she was not comfortable talking with the whole group. Since it is difficult to respond in the best possible way to children's questions

and comments while at the same time trying to keep order among a group of lively six-year-olds, I proposed to lead the first few discussions and to tape record them so Celia and I could listen to them afterwards. I thought that if she *saw my mistakes*, she might feel more comfortable with her own.

When you listen to the tape later on, you always find places where you could have done better—where you missed cues, misunderstood, or cut off a child; you also notice how the wording of a question will influence children's answers and how your own hidden agenda is quickly picked up by the group. I wanted to help Celia become aware of these things without having to be critical of her performance as discussion leader.

Over the months, Celia's confidence and competence as discussion leader improved dramatically. When, a year later, she told me that she had never previously had discussions with the whole group—"it terrified me"—I could hardly believe it. Discussions had become an integral and important part of her social studies curriculum.

One day in early October, I arrived at school to see a firetruck and an ambulance parked outside the building. It was fire prevention week and the volunteer firemen were giving their annual educational talks to groups of children. When I entered Celia's room, Becca ran up to me: "Did you see that man out there, the one by the firetruck, he has black, curly hair? That's my daddy!" Great, I thought, we'll ask him to come into the class if he has time to visit. What could be better than a father who is also a fireman!

I asked Celia if she would like me to ask Becca's dad to come into class. She looked a little surprised but agreed. Later she told me that she would never have thought of asking him to come in, but his willingness to visit her class helped her to feel more confident about approaching other parents: "Becca's dad was so friendly and open when he came in and talked to the kids. Right then they could make the connection that he was Becca's dad but he was also a fireman."

I suggested that Celia prepare the children by talking a little about his work and by helping them to think of questions to ask. When Mr. Jones arrived, they were ready: "Are you the chief? Who is the chief? How can you tell the chief? Do they have different color hats? What do they have in the ambulance? Why are some firetrucks white? What happens if the fire department is on fire? Do you have special kinds of clothes? How do you know where there's a fire? Do you get hot?" Mr. Jones answered the children's questions with great patience.

> Yes, you do get hot. A fire can be really, really hot, and then you have to have all those extra clothes on and you have this heavy thing on your back for oxygen and you get very hot. That's when you turn around and ask one of the other firemen to hose you down. Then you can cool off.

Before Mr. Jones left, Celia asked if the class could come for a visit to the firehouse. He said sure, that would be fine.

Our First Trip

Celia had taken field trips before but she had never enjoyed going. "I hated them," she told me. "It was a real hassle. It wasn't exciting. I just did them." I had loved going on field trips when I was teaching and I knew Celia would feel differently if I could help her with the preparation and organization of trips.

First, I asked her if we could spilt the class in half and take two trips to the firehouse. A part-time teacher assistant who worked in the school's first grade classrooms would make this possible, and Mr. Jones had no objection to two trips. Celia had never split the group before and was excited about going with a manageable number of children. Then I suggested that she make an appointment to tour the firehouse ahead of time so she could see what she wanted to stress and could prepare the children for what there was to see. Celia and I went there together, after school.

The trip was a great success. The children had talked about the firehouse, had questions ready, and were excited about going. We stopped to inspect some fire hydrants on the way and got to talking about where the water came from and how the hydrants are turned on. We also noted squirrel nests, road signs, and water meters. At the firehouse the children got a complete tour. They tried on firemen's clothes, slid down the pole, looked at the hoses in the drying room, and studied the maps, which showed the location of all the fire hydrants in the district. We looked at the firetrucks and the ambulance and went to a nearby fire hydrant. Mr. Jones opened it and explained how the water trucks were filled up. Then he invited us all to climb into a little antique firetruck—vintage 1927—and, with the children taking turns pulling the bell, he gave us a ride back to school.

After the second group had gone to the firehouse, the class had a discussion about the trips. Celia asked, "Do you want to tell me some of the things you liked about the trip to the firehouse?" There were many answers: "I liked where they hang the hose to dry"; "I liked the little firetruck"; "I liked when we got to see the water truck"; "I liked it when he put that thing in the fire hydrant where the water came out"; "I liked it when we went in that other room to see all the maps and stuff"; "I liked it when we put on their jackets and hats." Although the children's comments showed how much they had observed, it is hard to get a discussion going when everyone simply says what they like. I suggested to Celia that she ask the children if they had questions or if they wanted to find out more about certain aspects of the trip. Rather than just having unconnected answers directed at the teacher, I thought that encouraging questions might lead to more interaction among the children.

Teresa wanted to know about "them pointy things with the hose hanging down," but neither Celia nor I knew what she was talking about.

Mary: She means the thing they hold, two men hold it, on one side and the other.
Maja: The nozzle?
Teresa: No.
Kim: Where they hang up the hose?
Maja: In that high tower, you want to know how they get what?
Teresa: How do they get the stuff?
Maja: How do they get the hose up?
Teresa: No, how do they get them pointy things, them gold things up there?
Kelly: You want to know how they get them up there?
Teresa: Yes.
Maja: What are the pointy things, Teresa?
Teresa: You know, what they hang the hose on.
Maja: Oh, those hooks way up high, how do they get them up there?
Teresa: Yeah.
Maja: They take them up the ladder.
Teresa: Oh. We could write about it.

Sometimes, as here, we had to struggle to understand, but it was always worthwhile because the children knew what they were talking about and eventually we understood. In the meantime, other children got involved and the child who asked the question learned that his or her question was taken seriously, and that we would take as much time as was needed to clarify a point.

Follow-up activities to the firehouse trip were rich and varied. The children wrote comments to accompany photographs Celia had taken on the trip; they made individual picture books and a mural with descriptive text; they painted, built with blocks, and did a lot of play with water. The previous year, Celia had taken a water workshop at Mountain View with Barry Kluger; she went back to see him to get some help and to borrow rubber tubing, valves, and clamps. I had found that on many social study trips the follow-up activities led into science, and I was glad to have access to the science advisors at the Center. I could take teachers there, borrow materials, or invite an advisor to come to class for one or more sessions to help with science activities.

The Role of Trips in the Social Studies Curriculum

This was the first of many field trips that Celia took throughout the school year to places where the children's parents worked. Other trips were to a beauty shop,

a hospital, an alternative high school on a farm, a tea company (Celestial Seasoning), a pumpkin farm, and a nearby brick factory. A father who worked in an electronics store came to visit the class and did some demonstrations with electricity, which stimulated a lot of work with batteries and bulbs.

I went along on several of these trips, and helped with the planning and follow-up of others. Trips became an integral part of Celia's social studies curriculum and the follow-up activities reached into all subject areas. It was hard to believe at the end of the school year that there had been a time when Celia didn't like field trips. When we talked about this the following year, Celia said:

> I wanted to do more extending from field trips, but I wasn't sure how to do that. I just did really common things like drawing pictures and writing a few books. I never had any kind of discussion or talked much about the trip with the kids. . . . After Becca's father visited the class, when I went to the firehouse, I felt I had a purpose and questions I wanted to ask him. He was so helpful, and then we planned the trip and the kids were all keyed up for it because so much planning had gone into it, and I saw when you prepare for a trip it can turn out so nicely. . . . After that trip I began to think of field trips in a different way. . . . I saw them as being really important, the core of the curriculum, and I saw that things throughout the year can happen from them. It doesn't just last a couple of weeks and then stop. If you can really focus in on kids, things can go on and on and on.

Celia had wanted "a social studies program that would involve all the children and bring them closer together so they would see themselves as members of a group." The trips to parents' places of work, the rich after-trip activities in the classroom, and the many discussions that encouraged and respected children's thinking all contributed to meeting this goal.

During the summer workshop, Celia had said that she wanted help with implementation. I found that she had no trouble trying out new ideas. Except for discussions, she really didn't seem to need anyone to show her how to do things. Rather, she needed someone to help her think things through, to give her new ideas, share her discoveries, and support her when the going got rough. In most other professions, colleagues can do this for each other, but many elementary school teachers in self-contained classrooms are isolated and do not have the opportunity to develop these kinds of relationships with their peers.

Celia had said, "When you really focus on the kids, things can go on and on." There was one trip—to the brick factory—where things did indeed go on and on.[3] The children's interest in the brick factory lasted longer than Celia expected, and neither of us could have predicted how this subject would continue to grow. We went towards the end of that school year. We took two

trips there the following year, dividing the children into small groups on the return trip so they could concentrate on their favorite area. We went three times the year after that, starting out at the clay pit before going to the factory itself. Each time we went, we learned more and had more related activities in the classroom, and each time Celia thought that if we went back one more time, the children would learn even more.

At the end of our work together, Celia loved social studies, discussions, and trips, and her curriculum had the continuity and depth she had been missing.

Concluding Remarks

Working one-on-one with a teacher over an extended period of time tends to be regarded as an uneconomical way of giving help. Having worked in this way with teachers in many different settings, I am convinced that this concentrated, sustained kind of support—although seemingly uneconomical in the short run—gives better results in the long run than many of the more traditional inservice practices.

In most inservice workshops, teachers are addressed as one group even though they may be teaching all grade levels and have varying degrees of experience. Individual needs are rarely met, and help with the implementation of new ideas is almost nonexistent. The highly individualized work of advisors has its own way of spreading. Teachers who have received help often want to share their learning with colleagues. Advisors who start working with one or two teachers in a school frequently end up with a group of interested teachers. If networking is encouraged and supported, and teachers begin to feel that they are no longer struggling alone, the advisor's "uneconomical" help will have paid its way. ✦

Notes

1. As part of my dissertation research, an interviewer talked with a number of teachers with whom I had worked in the classroom.

2. *Pictorial Representation*, one of a series of booklets published by the Nuffield Mathematics Project in England in the 1960s, encouraged teachers to make many graphs dealing with various aspects of children's lives.

3. The trips to the Brick Factory are described in Chapter Ten of my Ph.D. dissertation, available through ERIC. They were also published in *Outlook*, No. 42, Winter 1981. *Outlook* was the quarterly journal of the Mountain View Center, published from 1970 to 1985.

References

Brearley, M., Goddard, N., Browse, B., & Kallet, T. (1972). *Educating teachers*. New York: Citation Press.